



State Representative Drew Stokesbary

2016 Legislative Review

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's a privilege to represent the 31st Legislative District and work on the issues facing our communities. I am excited to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in order to find solutions.

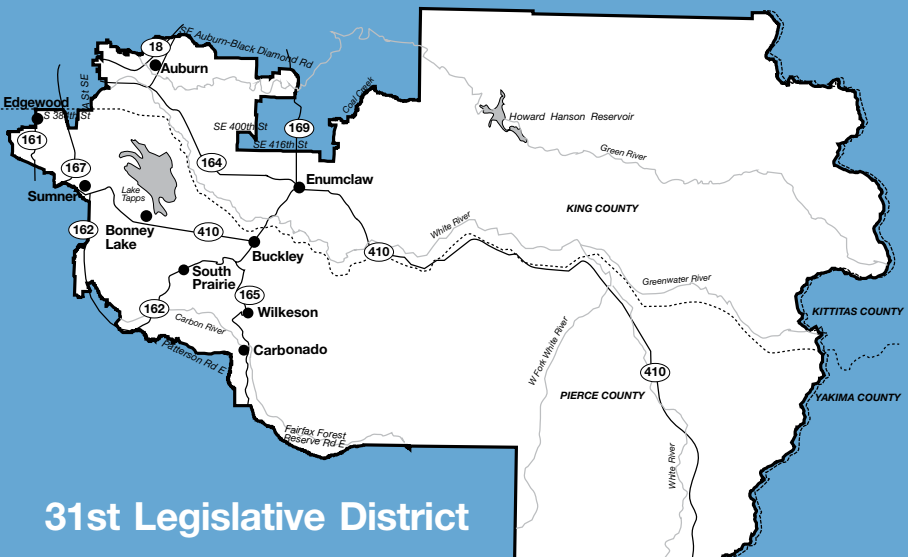
The most important part of my job is listening to you. The best ideas come from the people in our communities, not from government. I encourage you to get involved in the process by visiting me in Olympia or testifying during session on bills important to you.

I hope after you read this newsletter you will contact me to share your concerns and comments.

I look forward to seeing you in the 31st Legislative District!

Sincerely,

Drew Stokesbary



31st Legislative District

Representative Drew Stokesbary



2016 supplemental operating budget

This year, the Legislature was tasked with passing a supplemental operating budget. The purpose of a supplemental budget is to make minor, midcourse adjustments based on unforeseen emergencies, increased caseloads or correcting technical errors in the biennial operating budget.

To start negotiations, the governor and House Democrats proposed new tax increases and dramatically increasing state spending – going well beyond the normal scope of a supplemental budget. Their original proposal also did not account for K-3 class-size reductions, sought to tap the state’s rainy-day fund for non-emergency spending and abandoned the state’s four-year balanced budget requirement.

Though it took yet another special session to complete our work, I am pleased to report we passed a true supplemental operating budget that does not include major tax increases.

Here are some highlights:

- \$15 million for K-12 education, including \$5 million to recruit and retain K-12 staff.
- More than \$40 million for mental-health programs.
- \$4.2 million to keep public charter schools open.
- \$16 million for early learning and child care.
- \$190 million from the Budget Stabilization Account, our state’s rainy day fund, to pay for last year’s wildfires.

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Historic investment in education

The 2015-17 operating budget was the best budget for education in our state in more than a generation. This investment means the Legislature is on target to meet the 2018 deadline set by the state Supreme Court's 2012 *McCleary* ruling.

Here are some of the investments benefitting students and teachers:

- Invests an additional \$1.3 billion in K-12 basic education.
- \$350 million to reduce K-3 class size.
- \$180 million to expand full-day kindergarten.
- \$740 million for materials, supplies, and operating costs; and
- Fully funds the I-732 teacher COLA at maintenance level (\$232 million for 1.8 percent and 1.2 percent) and provides an additional one-time COLA (\$153 million for 1.2 percent and 0.6 percent) to provide an overall K-12 COLA of 3 percent and 1.8 percent.

We have more work to do to meet our constitutional obligation to fully fund K-12 education in Washington, including reforming our lopsided and unfair levy system, but it is clear we are well on our way to meeting our paramount duty. This will continue to be a bipartisan effort and I look forward to working toward this goal as we approach the 2018 deadline.

We also passed a historic tuition reduction for state colleges and universities, the first of its kind in the nation. This is a major victory for students and families pursuing higher education.

Government reform and accountability

As an elected official, I have no greater responsibility than ensuring state government is operating effectively and is accountable to the people of Washington. For that reason, I was honored to be appointed to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). JLARC works to make state government operations more effective, efficient and accountable. The Committee is comprised of an equal number of House and Senate members, Democrats and Republicans. Additionally, JLARC has been recognized as a national leader in legislative auditing by the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society.

You don't have to look much further than the State Auditor's Office, where our elected auditor was indicted for tax evasion, fraud and obstruction, to see how important it is to protect the public trust. This will remain a priority of mine during the interim and as I prepare for the 2017 session.

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My bills signed into law

During my first term, I sponsored four bills that passed the Legislature and were signed into law by the governor:

- House Bill 1253 removes duplicative regulations that would have allowed two separate state agencies to regulate accountants.
- House Bill 1637 permits tribal law enforcement agencies, like those at the nearby Muckleshoot and Puyallup Tribes, to access the state's prescription drug monitoring database. This gives our community another tool to combat the rising opioid epidemic.
- House Bill 1940 protects the funding for the King and Pierce counties' flood control districts, which will ensure they have the resources necessary to continue to fight flooding along the Green, White, Puyallup, and Carbon rivers.
- House Bill 2320 ensures Emerald Downs, which is regulated by the State Horse Racing Commission, will remain open regardless of legislative budget politics. This is welcome news not just for the track, but all the businesses nearby.

I also sponsored legislation to expand property tax relief available to seniors and veterans on fixed incomes. My bill didn't pass, but thankfully a similar Senate version did, and was signed into law last year.

In addition, I worked diligently with budget writers to fund important projects in our area. By working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I was able to help obtain budget appropriations for:

- A new Highway 18 off-ramp and a future bypass around Auburn Way South;
- The first stages of a new, wider Traffic Avenue bridge over Highway 410 in Sumner;
- Construction of a seismic wall along Jovita Boulevard in Edgewood;
- More homeless shelter beds at Auburn Youth Resources and a new Valley Cities drug rehabilitation facility in Auburn;
- Expanded facilities at Rainier School in Buckley;
- Completion of the brand-new Gordon Family YMCA in Sumner;
- Improvements, repairs, and maintenance at the Enumclaw Expo Center;
- Flood control projects along the Green River (north of Enumclaw), White River (in Sumner), and Puyallup River (between Sumner and Orting); and
- Continued expansion of the Foothills Trail in South Prairie, Sumner and Buckley.

Stay connected!



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